

The Misadventures of Sammy Small



THE WHITE STALLION OF THE STAKED PLAINS

By ALLEN KELLY.

There were no horses in America when Columbus sailed across the Western Ocean, although the horse was one of the most ancient inhabitants of the continent, antedating the Indian and the Aztec. The original American horse had several toes instead of a hoof, and he became extinct so long ago that the most ancient human records contain no hint of his existence.

The Spanish conquistadores brought to America horses of Arabian stock, introduced into Spain by the Moors, and many of the animals escaped or were turned loose in Mexico and upon the plains of the Southwest. These Andalusian Barbs were the ancestors of the mustang, the undersized, coarse-haired, wild horse of the plains.

The mustang of half a century ago resembled but remotely his Arabian progenitor, and notwithstanding the tales that were told of his fleetness and beauty, was quite an inferior animal, having reverted in wild life toward the original type from which the Arab was developed by selection and man's care.

When the English-speaking white men crossed the Mississippi, they took with them horses of larger breed, and many of these animals were captured by Indians and turned in with the herds of ponies. Some modification of the mustang type resulted from the accidental mixture, and later, when the plains became the free pasture for great herds of cattle and bands of horses, the ranchmen improved the breed systematically by turning loose well-bred stallions and mares.

Before the days of the wire fence, when the range was unobstructed and the herds roamed at will, it was impossible to keep track of every individual animal and without doubt many of the imported horses joined the wild herds and never were recaptured in the roundup.

Wonderful Wild Horses.

Therefore there is no reason for dismissing as fanciful tales the stories told by cowboys and plainsmen of wild steeds of marvelous beauty and speed, leading bands of mustangs and eluding easily all schemes for their capture. Every district of the cattle country, from Texas to Montana, from Kansas to California, has its legend of the wonderful wild stallion, and there is a basis of truth for every tale.

It was never my luck to see a wild horse answering to the glowing descriptions given by the tellers of the tales, but I have heard cowboys of unquestioned veracity tell of their own experiences in efforts to capture such an animal.

Ernest Thompson Seton's story of "The Pacing Mustang" is a composite of several familiar cowboy tales, and while it is probable that all the incidents included in the story were not connected originally with the career of the black pacer, the story is substantially true. The black pacer is no myth, unless scores of men conspired to concoct an elaborate fable or were inspired

supernaturally to tell the same fictitious yarn.

From a Texan cowpuncher not given to romancing I have heard circumstantial accounts of attempts made by himself and others to capture the white stallion of the Staked Plains. A dozen or fifteen years ago every cowboy in the Texas panhandle knew of the great white stallion and expected to get a sight of him anywhere between the Pecos and the Canadian, and many of them could tell mighty interesting yarns about chasing the beautiful beast.

As described by my Texan friend, the

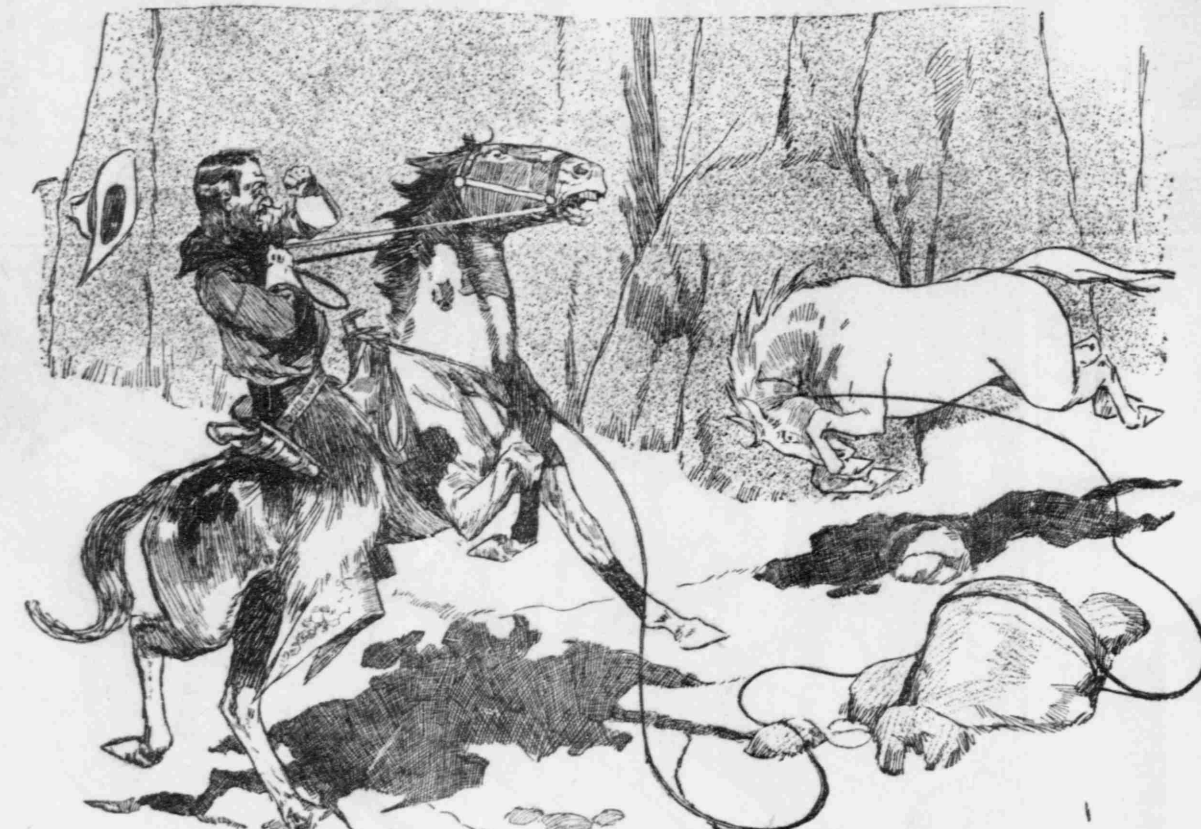
stallion was a creature of supernatural power in his string trying to run down the white stallion without ever pressing the wild horse to the limit of his speed and endurance.

Relays of cowboys tried it, and when the last of them gave out the white stallion was going easily and without a sign of distress.

My Texan friend craftily once maneuvered the white beauty into a "bar-ranca," taking advantage of his reluctance to abandon a bunch of mares, and managed to get close enough to throw a rope over his head. But in the very instant of his exultation disaster over-

white stallion had gone away with his rope. A week later he saw the stallion grazing with a bunch of mustangs at a distance, and through a field glass he discerned that the horse had rid himself of the rope.

That was the last of numerous attempts the Texan made or participated in to capture the big white horse. He had been in the habit of "taking his time" from the outfit he happened to be working with, whenever he discovered the white stallion, and putting in a week or two following the trail, but he made up his mind that there was



"The white stallion charged upon his captor."

horse was as tall as a Percheron and as finely formed as an English hunter; gigantic and yet symmetrical and clean limbed. His color was creamy white, without a spot or blemish; his tail, carried with the springing curve that marks the best Arab blood, swept the ground, and his mane was a fleecy cloud that enveloped his neck and fell almost to his knees.

Your Texan cowpuncher knows a horse, if any man does, and when you find him possessed by an almost insane desire to own a particular animal you may rest assured that the coveted creature is a "sure good horse."

No man ever laid eyes on the white stallion of the Llano Estacado without deciding instantly that it was his mission in life to catch and ride that equine marvel. But no man ever did ride him. Many a cowboy wore out the best

whelped him. Instead of plunging madly against the noose to escape, the white stallion charged upon his captor, and horse and man went down before his whirlwind rush.

Unhorsed by a Horse.

When he recovered his senses he was lying beside his horse, bruised and sore. His horse had a broken leg and was unable to rise, and he had to shoot the poor beast and pack the saddle many weary miles back to camp. There were other horses grazing along the way, but he could not catch one because the

something superequine in the animal, and that worse luck might attend further attempts at capture.

The latest wild horse story comes from southern Utah and it has to do with a great white stallion, leading a band of a hundred white horses of splendid build, all pacers. This band is said to have been seen first in Arizona, about seven years ago, and it is common report among the stockmen of the far western ranges that the pacers are so fleet that no horse carrying the weight of a man can force them into a run, much less overtake them.

Some six or eight years ago range horses of the inferior sort became utterly valueless in many parts of the West, and to save the pasturage for better stock and prevent deterioration of the breed by admixture with the mustang pony blood, ranchmen began

systematic extermination of the wild bands. Organized raids on the mustangs were made in Idaho, Eastern Oregon, Utah and Nevada, and thousands of horses were shot and left to the buzzards and coyotes, just as the buffalo were slaughtered when the army commanders in the West determined that the way to solve the Indian problem was to exterminate those splendid animals and deprive the roving red man of his commissary on the hoof and sent out the order to slay.

It is a fact not generally known perhaps, but nevertheless a fact, that the buffalo were wiped off the face of the earth by the military authorities, and not by British sportsmen nor by hide-hunters. The Crows and other Indians who helped in that vast slaughter were instigated to the work by Generals of the United States Army.

War on the Horse.

The ranchmen have at least as good a reason for declaring war upon the useless scrub horses of the range. The pasture lands of the West have been overstocked with cattle, and the grass has disappeared rapidly. There is no room on the ranges for worthless stock, and the little ponies that once served the Indian and the cowboys as mounts have become pests and are doomed to destruction.

The bands of wild, undersized ponies that ranged over Idaho were pretty well cleared out in 1897, when horses were of little value anywhere, and when it was believed that the trolley and the automobile would put the horse out of business. The Idaho ponies were worth about a dollar each for their skins, and their carcasses were made into fertilizer or perhaps canned for army corned beef.

Many White Pacers.

In the annual raids on the wild horses made by the stockmen of Utah and Nevada since 1897, it is said the white pacers have been seen many times, but because of their size, beauty and general desirability, no effort has been made to kill them. The ranchers hope to capture some of them by strategy, believing that they are of superior breed and capable of being trained for racing. If it is a fact that they are natural pacers, they are not of mustang stock, but must be the progeny of well-bred animals turned out upon the range by stockmen or lost accidentally some years ago. But for the great distance between the Staked Plains and the Colorado River, it might be a fair guess that the great white stallion was responsible for the strange band of white pacers.

An organized effort is to be made by the stockmen of Southern Utah and Nevada to secure some of the white pacers, according to reports from Salt Lake. It is asserted that the habits of the band have been observed, and that plans have been made by range riders acquainted with the country in which the white pacers are ranging that can hardly fail to bring about the capture of a part of the band.

A REVIVAL OF TATTOOING

WITH the ordinary tattooing as seen on the arms and chests of sailors we are all more or less familiar; even the more elaborate designs on the "tattooed man" at the museums excite but a passing interest; and indeed, except in rare cases, the designing is fantastic and the workmanship is crude. There are, however, some very good examples of the art among Uncle Sam's sailors, of which Seaman Peterson, of the Chicago, is an excellent example.

Japanese tattooers, and many of these were very beautiful in design and perfect in execution. It was surely a very original way of showing the depths of one's affection to have the initials of one's affianced with a heart, or true lover's knot, or even her portrait, in a perfect and beautiful miniature, tattooed on one's arm or over one's heart, but a rather dangerous one, too, considering the instability of things in general and of the "little god" in par-



From a photograph provided by the American Museum of Natural History.

His entire back is covered with intricate. The picture given here is perhaps one of the most remarkable examples of Japanese tattooing. According to the popular superstition of the lower classes in Japan, the numerous earthquakes are caused by a giant catfish, whose head is under Oshin and his tail under Kito. His anger and struggles are supposed to cause the seismic throes. It is this catfish that is represented in the example here presented, and the work is so fine, the perspective so perfect, that from a short distance the fish seems to be actually upon the back of the man.